

Co-operatives Australia has published this paper to affirm its commitment to the 2012 International Year of Co-operatives. The official theme of IYC 2012 is: Co-operative enterprises build a better world.

International Year of Co-operatives 2012

Co-operatives as Value Creating Business Enterprises

The United Nations has declared 2012 the International Year of Co-operatives in recognition of the valuable contribution made by co-operatives to global social and economic development.

IYC 2012 is an opportunity for Australia's co-operatives to celebrate and promote their economic and social impact throughout Australia.

Co-operatives are member owned businesses that reflect and reinforce the following set of internationally adopted values and principles –:

1. Voluntary and open membership
2. Democratic member control
3. Member economic participation
4. Autonomy and independence
5. Education, training and information
6. Co-operation among co-operatives
7. Concern for their community

Members own and control their co-operative on the basis of one member, one vote. Democratic control, however, depends on an ongoing co-

operative education program to guide co-operative business practice.

Co-operatives and IYC 2012

Co-operatives make a significant contribution to Australia's economy as demonstrated by the Annual Top 100 Co-operatives, Credit Unions and Mutuals list published by Co-operatives Australia.

The most recent edition, published in September 2010, revealing a combined annual turnover of some \$14.5 billion, total reported membership of over 8.1 million Australians and total reported employees of close to 14,000.

Strategic Priorities for IYC 2012

Co-operatives Australia has identified the following IYC 2012 strategic goals for Australia's co-operatives -

1. To increase awareness of the co-operative option and of existing co-operatives.
2. Enhance the capacity of the co-operative sector and movement.
3. Strengthen co-operative education.
4. Create legacy initiatives.

Achieving these goals will require the engagement of co-operatives at all levels – local, State and national – and engaging members, boards and staff.

IYC 2012 Steering Committee

The United Nations has called on its member nations to form national steering committees to ensure there is a co-ordinated approach to IYC 2012 planning and roll out .

With the support of Co-operatives Australia, Social Business Australia has established an IYC Steering Committee and IYC Secretariat.

Co-operatives Australia is represented on the IYC Steering Committee.

A National Call to Action information pack was mailed to about 2,500 Australian co-operatives, credit unions and mutuals in January by Social Business Australia on behalf of the IYC Steering Committee.

The IYC Secretariat is a central repository of information and contact for co-operatives and co-operatives interested in contributing to IYC 2012. The Secretariat will work closely with peak bodies such as Co-operatives Australia.

We encourage all co-operatives to provide the IYC Secretariat with contact details and contribute to an online calendar of IYC 2012 events. Simply [email your information to -](#)

iyc@socialbusiness.coop.

Planning for IYC 2012

Co-operatives Australia has commenced planning for IYC 2012.

An IYC 2012 web site will be established and Co-operatives Australia will be responsible for developing and maintaining the web site in co-operation with Social Business Australia and the IYC Steering Committee.

Preliminary planning is underway for a national co-operatives conference in 2012 that will be integrated with a complement of individual State IYC programs and activities.

An IYC 2012 Information Kit will also be developed for use by co-operatives. An online version of the kit will also be available.

A special IYC 2012 edition of the Top 100 Co-operatives, Credit Unions and Mutuals will also be published in 2012.

State Federations have also commenced the process of planning State-based initiatives and activities.

Co-operatives Australia and the State Federations realise that effective participation in IYC 2012 depends on the support and involvement of individual co-operatives throughout Australia.

Who is Co-operatives Australia?

Co-operatives Australia is the national body for state Co-operative Federations. It is an unincorporated body with membership by the State Co-operative Federations of New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Victoria and Western Australia.

Co-operatives Australia is engaged with the National Co-operatives Working on the development of co-operatives national law. Co-operatives Australia has also developed a number of important policy statements on the co-operative option:

1. Public Policy and Co-operatives (April 2009)
2. Australia's Top 100 Co-operatives, Credit Unions and Mutuals (June 2009 and September 2010)
3. Co-operative Education (March 2010)
4. Valuing Co-operation (April 2010)

Comments on IYC 2012 and this statement are invited and can be directed to -

secretary.co-ops.aust@australia.coop

Membership of Co-operatives Australia is restricted to State Co-operative Federations. Individual co-operatives should join their respective State Federations.

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